

УДК 304.2

DOI: 10.15421/3820020

N. Semeshko

Н. М. Семешко

Н. М. Семешко

*Oles Honchar Dnipro National University  
Дніпровський національний університет імені Олеся Гончара  
Днепроровский национальный университет имени Олеся Гончара*

**STYLISTIC INTERPRETATION OF SHORT STORIES  
BY F. S. FITZGERALD**

**СТИЛІСТИЧНА ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЯ ОПОВІДАнь  
Ф. С. ФІЦДЖЕРАЛЬДА**

**СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ РАССКАЗОВ  
Ф. С. ФИЦДЖЕРАЛЬДА**

The main task of an artistic text interpretation is to get maximum ideas and feelings of an artist blocked up there. Interpretation is always a version which can be disproved. F. Scott Fitzgerald is one of the greatest American writers notable for his unique originality. He is well – known not only for his famous novels but also for his brilliant short stories where he reproduced the crucial moment in the consciousness of the American people. His individual style is considered to be one of the best in American literature. He was a reformer of the American short story as far as the plot structure is concerned. Many of his short stories have unexpected or symbolic endings ruining the traditional «happy end».

*Keywords:* interpretation, analysis, repetition devices, aposiopesis, detachment, gradation, metaphor, epithet.

Головним завданням інтерпретації художнього тексту є вилучити максимум ідей та почуттів його автора. Інтерпретація – це завжди версія, яка може бути спростована. Ф. Скотт Фіцджеральд є одним з визначних американських письменників, який відрізняється неповторною самобутністю. Він відомий не тільки своїми знаменитими романами, а також і блискучими оповіданнями, в яких він передав злам у свідомості американців. Його індивідуальний стиль вважається одним з найкращих в американській літературі. Він був реформатором американського оповідання стосовно композиції художнього твору. Багато його оповідань мають несподівані або символічні кінцівки, немов руйнуючи традиційний «хепі-енд».

*Ключові слова:* інтерпретація, аналіз, повторення, апосіопезис, відокремлення, градація, метафора, епітет.

Главной задачей интерпретации художественного текста является получение максимума информации о замысле и чувствах его автора. Интерпретация – это всегда версия, которую можно опровергнуть. Ф. Скотт Фицджеральд является одним из величайших американских писателей, который отличается неповторной самобытностью. Он известен не только своими знаменитыми романами, но также и блестящими рассказами, в которых он передал слом в сознании американцев. Его индивидуальный стиль считается одним из лучших в американской литературе. Он был реформатором американского рассказа в плане композиции художественного произведения. Многие его рассказы имеют неожиданные или символические концовки, как бы разрушая традиционный «хэппи-энд».

*Ключевые слова:* интерпретация, анализ, повтор, апосиопезис, обособление, градация, метафора, эпитет.

Stylistic interpretation is an integral part of any stylistic analysis. Its necessity is dictated by general tasks of stylistics which presuppose not only description of stylistic variations in different texts but also explanation of relations between such variations from the one hand and individual contexts of language application from the other. In the well – known traditions of stylistic analysis interpretation is a means to establish connection between the language usage and the author's intentions as for the reader's reaction. It's necessary to remember that interpretation must be carried out by a specialist in the field of linguistics and literature. The main thing is that it is not so easy to differentiate analysis and interpretation. One can analyse only what one is able to perceive and understand to some extent. Interpretation unites perception, comprehension and explanation. Understanding is closely connected with comprehension that is with perception of an object or phenomenon as a whole, as a unity, as a necessary interconnection of components. Comprehension is the basis of interpretation. It becomes clear that analysis and interpretation are connected with each other.

Theoretical fundamentals of interpretation and stylistic analysis of an artistic text have been worked up by various scientists in our country and abroad. They touched upon some problems of the general theory of text interpretation and examined some of its aspects. K. Dolinin [5] and V. Kukhareno [6] suggested various methods of interpretation and described its main linguistic, stylistic and critical components. Problems of the text linguistics are in the centre of I. Galperin's [4] research. I. Arnold studied correlation between the author's idea and the reader's exegesis of the text [2]. This problem is considered from the point of view of psychology [3], psycholinguistics [7; 9] and methodology [1].

Comprehension is the starting point of interpretation. Interpretation lets us feel integrity of the text, analysis singles out and describes its parts. The whole doesn't exist without its parts and the parts have no value if they are not united. Summing up the abovementioned theoretical fundamentals we can state that text interpretation has three relatively independent directions: elucidation, estimation and comprehension. Text interpretation is at the meeting point of stylistics and linguistics. This branch of philological science renews the initial meaning of the term «philology» in its primary meaning. Analysis teaches us to see details and various artistic devices. Interpretation teaches us to cope with them, not to be afraid of them and enjoy their variety [See 8, p. 27].

Interpretation is always a creative work and every reader should be a creator; interpretation is always a version which can be disproved. The main task of an artistic text interpretation is to get maximum ideas and feelings of an artist blocked up there.

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940) is one of the greatest American writers notable for his unique originality. He «had the capacity (and the curse) of being able to immerse himself in the life of his age. He had a basic faith in the dignity of his vocation as a writer, and a somewhat more flickering faith in his own gifts. And he could regard himself and his work with a mordant, and sometimes morbid, candor. These qualities were essential components of his genius. At times they almost seemed, in fact, to be his genius» [10, p. 2282]. He reproduced the crucial moment in the consciousness of the American people extremely delicately: it was when the myth about the individual freedom was being ruined by the reality of the 1920's. F. Scott Fitzgerald is well known not only for his famous novels, but also for his brilliant short stories. He himself mentioned: «All the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them – the lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin, the dream mountains of my short stories blew up, my millionaires

were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants» [10, p. 2285]. In Fitzgerald's world quit and failure necessarily follow success.

The main character of his short story «The Sensible Thing» George O'Kelly after several attempts was a great success and at last he could «hug» his beloved girl Jonquil. But suddenly he felt that he had lost something very important. The writer added three statements after the traditional «happy end» ruining the classical plot structure and leaving the situation psychologically open. «Well, let it pass, he [George] thought. April is over. April is over.» [11]. Repetition helps to reveal the change of the character's feelings. They convey additional information making the statements more emotional and expressive. This repetition is full of George's disappointment: though now he is rich that doesn't bring him satisfaction and joy. It seems as if his love is over.

As the beginning of the story repetition produces the other effect. Somebody asked Jonquil if she had missed George and her answer was: «Oh, so much so much» [11]. Those words prove her deep feeling of love. Sometimes repetition is used to convey the character's embarrassment and agitation. George had been fired but he tried to pretend that everything was all right.

«I told them they had to», explained George hastily; «I told them if they didn't I wouldn't work for them anymore» [11].

Very often the inner state of the personage can be reproduced by such a device as aposiopesis. George left his jobplace as the circumstances had prompted his leaving. But he was glad because he hated his job:

«Only I couldn't quit myself, you see, and I want to thank you – for quitting me» [11].

Generally speaking Fitzgerald's characters are not passive observers or pessimists. Their life story is sometimes very rich; they work hard trying to let their dreams come true. They dream not only about their financial well – being. They strive for self – realization, self – approval and power. The character's strategy of making progress in an attempt to be generally recognized.

From the very beginning of this story the author examines the question of poverty and richness. He successfully conveys its importance with the help of gradation and polysyndeton: «The poor go under or go up or go wrong or even go on, somehow, in a way the poor have» [11]. Fitzgerald's main personage is in love, but he is poor and he treats his poverty as misfortune.

«... George O'Kelly was so new to poverty that had any one denied the uniqueness of his case he would have been astounded» [11].

The writer uses lots of stylistic devices and expressive means to reveal the inner world of his characters. It is extremely important for him to reconstruct the atmosphere surrounding them. The description of the surroundings is full of epithets with negative connotation:

«He [George] was in a mess, one of those terrific messes which are ordinary incidents in the life of the poor» [11].

In this context the reader feels certain equality between «terrific» and «ordinary». The idiom «to be in a mess» is a direct characteristic of the personage's hard times.

Some critics say that the conceptual field of this story is of nominative character which gives the opportunity to imagine the atmosphere of poverty around the main character:

«George O'Kelly, whose mind was over seven hundred miles away, thought that all outdoors was horrible. He rushed into the subway and for ninety – five blocks bent a frenzied glance on a car – card which showed vividly now he had only one chance in five of keeping his truth for ten years. At 137<sup>th</sup> Street he broke off his study of commercial

art, left the subway, and began to run again, a tireless, anxious run that brought him this time to his home – one room in a high, horrible apartment – house in the middle of nowhere» [11].

A certain string of epithets (horrible, frenzied, tireless, anxious) points at the fact that George feels hostility of the world around him. Epithet «horrible» creates a kind of framing in this passage. But the key detail here is his apartment – house «in the middle of nowhere». This metaphor as well as the verbs of motion (rush, run) convey the character's desire to escape. He can't find his right place in this world but he has to as he wanted to be with his beloved girl – the only reason of this mess in his life.

«The dark little girl who had made this mess, this terrible and intolerable mess, was waiting to be sent for in a town in Tennessee» [11].

Repetition of the word «mess» together with the epithets «terrible and intolerable» in postposition underlines the desperate situation in George's life. But he is ready to lead such a life and give up his dream for the sake of this 'dark little girl'. He has to choose between love, dream and money. After he had lost his love his dream came true and he made a progress.

Portrait characteristics play an important role in Fitzgerald's works. They appear either as separate traits or as detailed outward descriptions. The writer's style there is marked by the piling up of stylistic devices which interact and produce a strong effect of uniqueness. Singling out one feature in the outward appearance Fitzgerald plays up with it using new means and creates unusual associations, produces the impression of mutual penetration of outward features into the inner world of the personage. Certainly epithets play the main part in portrait characterization. When George is embarrassed and confused the author mentions that he was «a distraught young man» whose «face grew pink...». Jonquil is described as an attractive girl with «dark velvet eyes», «picturesque fragility», «beautiful eyes... sane and kind».

A significant role in Fitzgerald's narration belongs to detached constructions.

The information enclosed in them is taken in as amplification and reminding.

«He [George] knew what «nervous» meant – that she was emotionally depressed, that the prospect of marrying into a life of poverty and struggle was putting too much strain upon her love [11]. The author reveals the meaning of the word «nervous» in the detachment». It means Jonquil's emotional exhaustion because she is constantly waiting for a happy life and is not sure about a happy end. George's feelings after his discharge become clear in the following sentence with detachment.

«He felt happy, exultant – for the first time in six months he was absolutely free» [11]. He hated his job that's why he was happy after he had been fired.

All the time George was career-minded as he considered his career-minded as he considered his career to be the only way to be with his beloved girl. Finally he made a progress but he felt some stronger changes in his feelings:

«He might press her close now till the muscles knotted on his arms – she has something desirable and rare that he had fought for and made his own – but never again an intangible whisper in the dusk, or on the breeze of night...» [11].

He realized that his love had lost its romantic richness. This is underlined by epithets and metaphors in this sentence. This is crossed out by the word «never».

Fitzgerald tried to penetrate into the inner world of his characters. He widely used aposiopesis implying their feelings of anxiety and indecision.

(«There was no time to lose – <»; «Not even time for – <»; «There's all the time in the world») [11].

At the end of the story George is suffering but that is not because of Jonquil's refusal. He himself is not able to give up career because of love. The little of the story «The Sensible Thing» proves that that was the only sensible thing for him. But the sensible thing sometimes doesn't coincide with our desires. That's why George can't call himself happy.

Fitzgerald raised the problem of true and imaginable success. As we see from the story George's striving for success was all – consuming: he was ready to pretend to be successful but not to confess that it was only his dream. But being penniless and unsuccessful he was in love and he was loved. After he had made a progress he lost the beauty and charm of love inherent in him. Thus success absorbed, ruined and romance. Striving for well – being and sober reckoning occupied the first place in George's life.

The story «The Sensible Thing» completely discloses the theme of success in Fitzgerald's creative work. The romantic and realistic tendencies of the reality representation are interlaced in it. The author skillfully reproduces subtle feelings of his characters. His main personage suffered greatly but succeeded at last, made a progress. Finally he realized that love and romance are in his past. He had to make a choice. His choice was a successful career.

In most of his stories Fitzgerald avoids his individual commentary and discovers his characters through their actions. These specifics can be clearly seen in his story «Two Wrongs». The reason of his characters' sufferings is the so – called self-betrayal and passion for false values.

The story is centered round the producer Bill and his charming wife who «had a good record of faithfulness and of tenderness toward each other» [12]]. Their relations are based on the feeling of love and mutual respect. In some time they got married and gave a birth to a little Billy. They moved to London where Bill used to spend his time with the English aristocrats, drink much and work less. The crash of their relations came after Emmy had given a birth to a still – born child. Bill wasn't beside her at that time. Later he realized that he had lost his beloved woman. He fell ill and had to leave London to continue his treatment. The only Emmy's feeling then was sympathy. That was the end of their relations.

Fitzgerald introduced two characters, two careers and two guilts. Bill and Emmy couldn't imagine their life without each other, without stage and without serious achievements there.

As the beginning of the story the author introduced Bill who was a successful producer and it took him only a couple of years to become a great producer in New York.

Two central characters of this story represent two careers, two love stories and two guilts. They couldn't imagine their life without each other and without stage, as Bill was a producer and Emmy was an actress. Bill was one of the best in his profession and succeeded very early: «There years – nine shows – four big hits – only one flop» [12]. We see the author's direct characterization in the very first portrait description of Bill. Fitzgerald describes him as «fresh – faced young Irishman exuding aggressiveness and self – confidence until the air of his office was thick with it» [12]. His main personage is young, healthy (epithet «fresh – faced») but his push is rather oppressive (metaphor «the air of his office...»). He is sure that he is a great producer, he enjoys his success but has no time to pay attention to something else: «By 12:30 he had forgotten anything except that he was going to be the greatest producer in the world... It was November and the first exhilarating rush of the season was over, but he could look east and see the electric sign of one of his plays, and west and see another...» [12]. Bill's life is dynamic. The rhythm of his life is conveyed with the help of polysyndeton and a certain contrast



(antithesis «east – west»). Everything speaks about his overwhelming success and his wish to take in everything. «To have a hit», as Fitzgerald states, Bill is ready to put up even with offenses and give money for non – commercial performances. Finally he has got a certain status among his luxurious friends. Simultaneously with this the author develops one more career – of Bill's wife Emmy. «She was very young, with beautiful red hair, and more character in her face than her chatter would indicate» [12]. Though she is worn out by her pregnancy, loneliness and Bill's indifference she «made up her mind she could take care of herself» [12]. After desperate attempts to make Bill worry about her Emmy realizes that she has to deal with «a big idiot» («Oh, go on; don't just stand there like a big idiot»). She is going to give a birth to a child but her husband is not beside her: «... But it was awful when I thought you were dead. Everybody's dead. I wish I was dead» [12]. These utterances disclose her emotional upsurge. Short sentences, repetition (dead) and Conditional Mood in the last sentence convey the change in Emmy's attitude to Bill. The reader understands that there is no loving Emmy anymore. Then she starts to notice that her husband is «pale and terrible, with rumpled clothes and bruises on his face» [12]. These epithets with negative connotation are not simply portrait details as they evidently discover the death of love between Emmy and Bill. The death of their child becomes a certain key turning point in their relations.

The culmination point of this story is rather sad. Bill is going to die and he is aware of this fact. But now Emmy is interested only about her achievement on the stage: «Just imagine... – she broke off, feeling skin of her elation how abstracted he was – tell me what you've got on your mind» [12].

Aposiopesis, metaphor and epithets let us realize this. At the end of the story Fitzgerald introduces the image of a crowd catching Emmy and her son:

«... she and little Billy were swept along with the crowd» [12]

This metaphor makes the reader realize that the main characters have already lost their individuality. Bill starts to think about his wife in the past tense:

«She was a fine girl – one of the best. She had character» [12]

The Past Simple tense, aposiopesis and repetition intensify the sad tone of the denouement of this story.

Fitzgerald's style is considered to be one of the best in American literature. He was to some extent a reformer of the American short story. The plot structure of his short stories is always intriguing. His main task was to disclose the inner world of his personages that makes his stories deeply psychological. The writer pays great attention to the development of a personality.

The author's is centered round his personage, his mood, his feelings, his psychological state which is conveyed in metaphors, epithets. Sometimes Fitzgerald appeals to symbolism (the image of a crowd at the end of the short story «Two Wrongs»). Sometimes his stories may have an unexpected ending (as in «A Sensible Thing»): he postpones the culmination point to the end. Bitterness of the loss is often implied in his short stories. Their final lines consist of short, abrupt sentences with repetitions which produce a specific rhythmical design. Fitzgerald uses almost all syntactic stylistic devices but his favorite are aposiopesis, detachment, polysyndeton and gradation. His arsenal of stylistic devices is also full of metaphors and epithets. The remarkable feature of his works is that he doesn't usually comment on his characters' conduct. On the one hand his narration is quiet but on the other it is emotionally tense. Fitzgerald's language is rich and varied giving an interesting material for stylistic interpretation.

## References

1. **Andronkina N.M.** Tekstovyi material v obuchenii inostrannomu yazyku kak spetsial'nosti: monografiya. Gorno-Altaysk: RIO GAGU, 2008. 198 s.
2. **Arnol'd N.V.** Stilistika. Sovremenniy angliiskii yazyk: Uchebnyk dlya vuzov. 4-e izd., ispr. i dop. Moskva: Flinta: Nauka, 2002. 384 s.
3. **Vygotskii L.S.** Psikhologiya iskusstva Moskva: Progress, 1999. 358 s.
4. **Gal'perin I.R.** Stilistika angliiskogo yazyka: ucheb. dlya studentov in-tov. i fak-tov. inostr. yaz. Izd. 2-e, ispr i dop. Moskva: Vysshaya shkola, 1977. 332 s.
5. **Dolinin K.A.** Interpretatsiya teksta: Frantsuzskii yazyk: Uchebnoe posobie. Izd. 4-e. Moskva: Kom Kniga, 2010. 304 s.
6. **Kukhareno V.A.** Interpretatsiy a teksta: Uchebnoe posobie. Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1988. 95 s.
7. **Leont'ev A.A.** Priznaki svyazannosti i tsel'nosti teksta. *Lingvistika teksta/* otv. red. I.N. Chernysheva. Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1976. Vyp. 103. s. 60–69.
8. **Matyushkin A.V.** Problemy interpretatsii literaturnogo khudozhestvennogo teksta: Uchebnoe posobie. *Federal'noe agenstvo po obrazovaniyu, GOUVPO «KGPU».* Petrozavodsk: Izd-vo KGPU, 2007. 190 s.
9. **Serazhim K.S.** Sutnist' i priroda interpretatsii tekstu. URL: <http://journalib.univ.kiev.ua/index.php?act=article&article=2342>
10. **Cleaves Brooks, R. W.B. Lewis, Robert Pen Warren.** American Literature. The Markers and the Making. Book D. 1914 to the Present. St. Martin's Press. New York, 1973–1974. P. 2282–2295.
11. **F.S. Fitzgerald.** The Sensible Thing. 2003. URL: <http://fitzgerald.narod.ru/sadmen/034e-sens.html>.
12. **F.S. Fitzgerald.** Two Wrongs. 2003. URL: <http://fitzgerald.narod.ru/taps/067/e-wrongs.html>.

*Надійшла до редакції 10.11.2019*